120.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE

OCTAGON CHAPEL, in the City of BATH,

ON THE DAY THE

James Johnson

Late BISHOP of WORCESTER was Buried.

(Price ONE SHILLING.)

BRITISH MUSEUM

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BY

The Reverend GEORGE BUTT, A. M.

Rector of STANFORD, Vicar of CLIFTON-UPON-TEME,

AND

Chaplain to the Right Hon. the Earl of FINLATER and SEAFIELD.

OXFORD,

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MDCCLXXV.

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W. Musgrave.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ERRATA.

Page 2. *Read* In this Place ſuch ſolemn Spectacles, *inſtead of* In this ſolemn Place ſuch Spectacles.

Page 4. *Read* the one or, *inſtead of* the one nor.

Page 7. *Read* Senſibility to, *inſtead of* Senſibility of.

Page 12. *Read* weakened by Time, *inſtead of* wakened by Time.

BRITISH MUSEUM

Page 17. *Read* Stock *inſtead of* Sock.

Page 22. *Read* this Place, *inſtead of* his Place.

Page ditto. *Read* diſſerve, *inſtead of* deſerve.

II. TIM. Chap. i. Verſe 10.

AND HATH BROUGHT LIFE AND IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT THROUGH THE GOSPEL.

YET, although Chriſt only hath brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Goſpel, it cannot but add ſome Credibility to Divine Revelation, that it's Doctrines are agreeable to Reaſon; moreover, the general Affectation at preſent of reaſoning upon all Subjects, and the too great Probability that ſome of this Audience are not ſuperior to the faſhionable Affectations, render it proper for me, in diſcourſing upon that Life and Immortality, which is only brought into full Light through the Goſpel, to ſhew how far the Concluſions of Reaſon have in this Reſpect agreed with Divine Revelation.

The principal Part of this Diſcourſe will be employed in proving, that altho' good Men are not in general more miſerable than bad Men in this Life, they are not, however, ſo happy therein as that a future State may not be reaſonably expected, where they ſhall be as diſtinguiſhed by their ſuperior Happineſs, as they were here by their ſuperior Virtue. This Diſquiſition will include many melancholy Particulars; but, however, is proper to excite in you that Temper of Seriouſneſs, and Tenderneſs of Senſibility, which may render you duly intereſted in

thoſe Reflections which in the Cloſe of this Diſcourſe I ſhall make on the Death and Character of a late eminent Prelate. A few Weeks paſt he came to this Place in perfect Health; at this Inſtant are his Funeral Solemnities performing; many of you muſt have ſeen the melancholy Proceſſion, which paſſed through this City; muſt have mark'd the numerous Spectators; muſt have obſerv'd in them an uncommon Silence and Sorrow; yet in this ſolemn Place ſuch Spectacles are frequent; the ſingular Impreſſion therefore muſt have been made by the Remembrance of that extraordinary Accident which has depriv'd us of this reſpectable Perſon. An Accident ſo extraordinary, befalling one ſo prudent and virtuous, ſhould affect the Giddy, Gay, and Diſſipated with an alarming Apprehenſion of the many Dangers to which their Follies and Vices more continually expoſe them. "In the Midſt of Life we are in Death," ſays our holy Liturgy of all Men; more eſpecially to them may this animated Sentence be applied. But I muſt not anticipate thoſe Reflections which are referr'd to the Cloſe of my Diſcourſe. I ſhall proceed immediately to deſcribe the chief Arguments upon which mere Reaſon may eſtabliſh the Belief of a Future State and Judgment.

As it is probable that the Divine Being will beſtow the Bleſſing of immortal Life upon ſome of his Creatures, reaſonable is the Concluſion that this Bleſſing is intended for Man; for ſhould he exiſt in no other State than the preſent, many of his Capacities and Inclinations not having their due Objects in this Life, either ſeem aſſigned him for no End, or as the Means of his Miſery. But God is wiſe and good;—in the Creation of other Animals he has adapted their Nature to the preſent State,

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and thereby made them more happy than miſerable. Moreover, the Spirituality of the human Soul, the little Probability from it's indiviſible Nature that it dies with the Body, are farther Circumſtances tending to prove a future State. But as the Proofs of a future State tend to prove a future Judgment, ſo the Reaſons for expecting this, react an Evidence in favour of a future State; an Evidence equally clear and ſtrong; therefore ever moſt approved by ſuch wiſe Men who have rather choſen to ſerve Truth by the Clearneſs and Strength, than their own Vanity by the Subtlety of their Arguments. That there ſhall be ſuch a Diſpenſation of Rewards and Puniſhments, in a future State, will appear probable from the following Reflections.

The Welfare of Society requires that the Practice of Virtue ſhould be as general as poſſible, conſequently that there ſhould be ſufficient Motives encouraging Men to practiſe it; to this Purpoſe the Expectation of a future Judgment ſeems a Motive ſufficiently ſtrong for a Free Agent in a State of Probation; we cannot indeed conceive a ſtronger, plainer, and more univerſal Motive for ſuch a Being in ſuch Circumſtances.

The Love of Virtue, for it's own Sake, has been thought ſufficiently ſtrong as a Motive to practiſe it; but this Motive cannot extend far, and with whatever Energy it may operate, can operate only on a few thinking Men.

With Regard to the Fear of Civil Puniſhment;—ſuch a Principle may indeed affect ſome external Actions; it cannot all; it cannot the Conſcience; it cannot many ſingle Acts, which are often as detrimental to Society as thoſe which are the Ob-

jects of Civil Puniſhment; and it cannot affect many Manners and Habits which occaſion much Miſery in human Life: This Motive, therefore, is as much too imperfect as the former is too perfect, (if either of them can be called perfect, when both are defective equally in the Extent of their Influence) inaſmuch as the Love of Virtue for it's own Sake can extend only to a few Perſons, and the Fear of Civil Puniſhment only to a few Actions.

But if the Practice of Virtue is neceſſary on Account of it's Utility, will not the Conſideration of this Utility perſuade Men to practiſe it? It will not; were it for this Reaſon only,—that the Utility of Virtue is to be proved by a comprehenſive View and Compariſon of many Circumſtances; improper therefore as a general Motive to Virtue.

But does not the ſhort, common, intelligible Notion, that Virtue is the Law of our ſupreme Governor, include a ſufficient Motive for obeying that Law, for being virtuous? It does not; unleſs ſome Puniſhment were annexed to Diſobedience, ſome Reward to Obedience. God, merely as ſupreme Governor, inveſted with Omnipotence, is only an Object of Terror; good and reaſonable muſt he be conſidered, ere he can become entitled to virtuous Obedience; but he would neither be the one nor the other if he did not diſtinguiſh between the Obedient and Diſobedient.

But if Men are not Free Agents; or if good Men are ſufficiently rewarded, and wicked Men duly puniſh'd in the preſent State, the Hope of a future cannot have a Foundation in Reaſon.

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The Free-agency of Man, (which I am bold to think has been injudiciously defended by the Method of Ratiocination, as it seems to me impossible to mark with Precision the Point in the human Mind wherein Free-agency commences) has been acutely questioned by the modern Advocates of Infidelity; especially by one, the most exceptionable of whose well-known Essays, among the few who read, and the fewer who think, in this Region of childish Dissipation, are as popular as if they were the Productions of exquisite Taste, of a Judgment the most manly, and an Intention the most virtuous.

It has never been denied that Men in general have been conscious, had an immediate intuitive Consciousness of their Free-agency; but the Authority of this Evidence has been questioned, the Evidence of reasoning been opposed to it, and employed in proving that Men are not Free Agents; and since this Method of extending the Province of Ratiocination beyond it's due Bounds, in religious and metaphysical Researches, has enabled Infidelity to supply Vice with a seeming Defence, and a certain Encouragement; and as no Truth, however important or sacred, can be received as Truth, if nothing is admitted as self-evident, it may be useful by shewing that the Evidence of immediate Intuition (upon which the Doctrine of Free-agency may be justly rested) is a greater Evidence than that of reasoning, to place this Doctrine upon an impregnable Foundation, and to invalidate in general that sceptical System, which is erected upon the Ruins of Common Sense. But immediate Intuition or Common Sense is this great Evidence; because Reasoning is conducted by Means which render it a more distracting and difficult Object of Perception than Truth immediately seen; requiring often unusual Strength

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of Memory for the Apprehenſion of all its Parts, and a peculiar Degree of Judgment for the Diſcernment of it's Validity. Valid, however, it cannot be, unleſs ultimately built upon ſome ſelf-evident Truth, or ſome Truth immediately ſeen. Shall we therefore be influenced by an Argumentation, merely becauſe agreeable to ſome ſelf-evident Truth, and remain uninfluenced by a ſelf-evident Truth itſelf? But that we are Free Agents is a ſelf-evident Truth; guilty, therefore, are we of the above-mentioned Abſurdity, if we do not believe this plain Dictate of immediate Intuition, without enquiring whether any Reaſoning may or may not be produced in Confirmation of it. Reaſoning is an Auxiliary only to Common Senſe. Intuition is, in God, that Operation of the Divine Intellect whereby he perceives all things at one View; and Common Senſe is a Ray of that Divine Intuition in Man; is that Part of the human Intellect which moſt reſembles the Divine. Shall we then uſe the Auxiliary, Reaſon, when the noble Principal may be employed? a painful Method when we have an eaſy one? But the painful Method, but the Activity of Reaſoning admits a Diſplay of ſuperior Genius. This is the Circumſtance that attracts Men out of common Ways, and the humbler, ſafer, and ſurer Tracks of Thinking, into the dangerous and conſpicuous Heights of Paradox. Reaſon, without the Clue of Common Senſe, wanders madly in an endleſs Labyrinth; for Inſtance, has not it's proud Labours after Truth ſeemed to diſcover that Truth is unſearchable? if he can be ſaid to reaſon, who, denying all ſelf-evident Truth, virtually affirms one, in affirming there are none; for he could not arrive at this Aſſertion, 'There are none,' were not the Courſe of his Argumentation ſtopped by ſome one ſelf-evident Truth. But, to leave a Subject ſo diſagreeable, let us determine that Men are Free

Agents,

Agents, and for this plain Reaſon, becauſe they are conſcious of their Free-agency. Yet, although Men are free Agents, and accountable Beings; if Virtue is attended with its Rewards in this World, it ſeems not inconſiſtent with the Divine Juſtice to cloſe our Exiſtence in this Life. And acknowledged it muſt be, that Virtue, even in Things temporal, ſeems upon the Whole moſt profitable; yet, annihilate the Hope of a future State, and many Evils, now more tolerable to virtuous than vicious Men, will very much alter their Nature, oppreſſing thoſe whom they would now only aggrieve in a ſmall Degree: And if good Men, even with this Hope, are ſometimes more miſerable than happy, what muſt they become without it? Time permits us not to produce many Inſtances; one may ſuffice; and that ſhall be the Death of Friends. To loſe a beloved Friend by Death, no more to renew that Converſation wherein once was a prime Delight, thus to part, to be divided, to be torn aſunder, is ſomething more than Grief, is the extremeſt Agony, the moſt pungent Torture of the Soul: But introduce the Belief of a future State, conſider that an everlaſting Converſation may ſhortly commence between you and your virtuous Friend, unleſs, by a rebellious Reſiſtance of Divine Appointment in fruitleſs Lamentation, you incur the Danger of a worſe Separation; and this utmoſt Miſery will be ſoothed down into the blameleſs Infirmity of a gentle Grief, and an occaſional Melancholy, or ſometimes be elevated into a Soul-ſwelling Extaſy at the Thoughts of a Meeting 'to part no more.'

Theſe Sentiments remind me, that from the ſuperior Tenderneſs uſual to good Men, ariſeth a greater Senſibility of the Misfortunes or Wickedneſs of thoſe who are connected with them.

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The Vice, the Death, or the Diſtreſs of a Child, a Parent, or a Friend, touch more ſenſibly a Heart ſoftened with Benevolence, and delicate with Innocence, than that Heart which is hardened with Selfiſhneſs, or rendered brutal with habitual Baſeneſs. The Pang of Pity in it's greateſt Degree, is peculiar to the virtuous Spirit; but you may ſay, That to indulge any Paſſions in ſo great a Degree as to diſcompoſe your Contentment is not an Act of Duty. Notions derived from the more prudent Philoſophy, Syſtems of Conduct modified by the Prevalence of Selfiſhneſs, teach an Individual in forming himſelf to regard himſelf, as he ſtands affected towards the preſent Life; but thoſe Actions, however, are moſt virtuous, which intentionally are productive of moſt Good; and the Spirit of that Religion, whoſe favourite Quality is Charity, dictates this Advice to each Man, 'So regu-'late your Conduct in this Life, that you may perform the moſt 'Good therein; hereafter expect your Reward.' Some Attention is due to Self; alas! we need not be fearful of not paying this Attention; ſo naturally are our Affections this Way inclined, that the Labour is to give them the contrary Direction. Thus producing a wider Good by our Benevolence, we may truſt our own Intereſt with God; 'tis a noble Negligence, and 'tis the magnanimous Wiſdom of the Children of Light; but the Children of this World are ſaid to be wiſer in their Generation; and how ſoon paſſeth away their Generation! In ſhort, the moſt virtuous Man is commonly one whoſe Reaſon and Affections urge him into the moſt benificent Conduct. We cannot in general act from mere Senſe of Propriety; we are Men, we muſt be impelled, we muſt be ſwayed in Part by Paſſions; our Paſſions muſt be benevolent, would we act virtuouſly: whence it ſeems that to Virtue peculiarly belong the friendly, the generous, the

humane

humane Affections, and all thoſe tender Senſibilities to which a heart ſo affected is continually expoſed in the preſent Life.

Moreover, the awakened, the attentive Conſcience of a Man truly virtuous expoſes him to many Anxieties: Various, for Inſtance, are the holy Conflicts and Contritions which exerciſe his Spirit with ſecret Sorrows. Add to theſe Evils and the like, from which the rude and careleſs Nature of Wickedneſs exempts a Man, that the good Man ſuffers often in his wordly Proſperity, and is diſappointed in his reaſonable Deſigns, from thoſe very Virtues which entitle him to Succeſs, and which render Society itſelf intereſted that ſuch as he ſhould have moſt Sway therein. Should intellectual Ability be added to moral, the very Energies of united Genius and Virtue, and the ſelf-ennobling Conſcioufneſs thereof, render him a Man vaſtly too ſimple, direct, animated, and dignified, to practice thoſe Accommodations, thoſe Arts of riſing which are commonly moſt effectual. Alas! eminent Station ſeldom elevates into Notice well-faſhioned Virtue, but is more often an evil Opportunity of rendering Inſignificance conſpicuous, and mean Qualities more obvious to Contempt. Moreover, the virtuous Man, though endowed with a good Underſtanding, cannot always guard againſt thoſe Arts in other Men, which, foreign to his own Diſpoſition awake not his Suſpicion, and are, therefore, not eaſily detected; yet, when injured by theſe Arts, he is ſenſibly affected in Proportion to the warmth of his Benevolence, and his Averſion from ſuch Practices. From the ſame Senſibility and Probity is he tenderly moved with undeſerved Cenſure; and yet what Innocence can exempt him from it? He looſeth many Things for want of aſking, becauſe he thinks it infamous to

aſk for every Thing. He had rather retire into ſequeſtred Scenes, out of the coarſe Ways and Contentions of Avarice, and Ambition, and Effrontery, and leave to bold Men to diſgrace thoſe Offices which he could have adorned. Yet, his Heart often aches for a beneficent diſplay of thoſe Qualities which are uſeleſs in his humble Station. For he who may not think himſelf worthy of eternal Happineſs, but by the Means of a Saviour, yet, however, may think himſelf too noble for the Inefficiency of an humble Condition; eſpecially ſhould that Condition and Exiſtence be bounded by Death. Theſe are Inſtances of Evils peculiar to Virtue: But a good Man is not exempt from thoſe Evils to which all Men are liable; he is not exempt, for Inſtance, from hereditary Diſeaſes, at leaſt an infirm Conſtitution may be derived from Anceſtors; the knowledge of correcting which, though a Part of Wiſdom, is not a Part of Virtue. Virtue includes an endeavour to be temperate; but not a Knowledge of that Mode of Temperance which is proper to any particular Individual. What ſhall we ſay of hereditary Madneſs, and thoſe phrenſical Horrors which make a Man miſerable beyond all Conception, and often without any Poſſibility of Cure? What ſhall we ſay of thoſe other innumerable Accidents to which all Men are liable? (Alas! we cannot but think now of one ſad Proof, that the beſt Men cannot always avoid them.) or of thoſe innumerable Diſeaſes to which the very Duties of Virtue may expoſe Men; eſpecially of thoſe contagious Diſeaſes from which an Eſcape often is impoſſible? What ſhall we ſay of War, of Famine, of Peſtilence, of Earthquakes, of Tempeſts, of Fires, Inundations, and Lightnings,—of ſuch aweful Viſitations? Of theſe, and moſt other Evils that make this ſhort Life calamitous, we may truly ſay, that they are deſtined in general

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to wean our Affections from a Life ſo ſhort, and to refer them to that happier State, whoſe Duration will not be ſhort, wherein there ſhall be no more either natural or moral evil.

Moreover, in weighing the Happpineſs of good Men, we are accuſtomed, methinks, to conſider Virtue in the general Notion, as if every good Man poſſeſſed all thoſe Qualities which are included in the abſtract Idea of Virtue; and becauſe an Individual poſſeſſing all thoſe Qualities, will probably poſſeſs alſo the natural Advantages that ariſe from them. We fancy good Men in general, even in this Life, to be much happier, than upon the juſter View of them they will be found to be. So true it is, that an extenſive Inſight into Individuals, is as neceſſary for accurate Conceptions in moral Science as in moſt other Sciences. But the good Man, of whom we have been diſcourſing, is not in general the glorious Character imagined in Speculation, practiſing with all poſſible Perfections the cardinal Virtues; but ſimply a Man, who according to his Share of Ability, endeavours what he can to perform his Duty: His Virtue is aſcertained by his Intention and Endeavour, and not by his Ability. And although this may be ſmall, yet if he means and endeavours well, he may be more meritorious than a Man better qualified, and ſeemingly more virtuous: For we denominate Men virtuous from what we ſee, their Actions; but God eſtimates them from what we ſee not, their Intentions and Endeavours. Whence it follows, that often the beſt Men, that is, the beſt meaning beſt endeavouring Men, may be very miſerable in Life from the blameleſs want of moral Ability. But ſhall the worthy Endeavour, ill aſſiſted by a defective Intellect, or painfully hindered by natural Infirmity, no where produce

any Happineſs? Muſt the Grave be the common Termination? and muſt all the Agonies of Virtue end in Annihilation? Annihilation! gracious God! is not it, the unnatural Refuge only of Sinners dying and deſpairing of thy Mercy? But to the good Man, the lover of God and Man, apprehenſive of Beauty and noble Deſign in the Works of his Creator, apt by the very inſtincts of Goodneſs to entertain cheerful Thoughts, and Hopes, and Affections. What ſays the Expectation of total Death? it ſays, that although his deſerving Soul has torn itſelf from ſordid Paſſions into the Liberty of virtuous Conduct; that although his Heart has long beat high with worthieſt Purpoſes, and has long been ſenſible to the Impreſſions of every tender, amiable, and benevolent Sentiment; it ſays, that when he has ſuffered farther Troubles incident to mortal Life; when his Senſes ſated by Repetitions, and wakened by Time, have taught him to diſreliſh, and his matured Virtue to deſpiſe human Things; when the Forgetfulneſs of Age ſhall have ſhut out moſt of his pleaſing Retroſpects, not powerful enough, however, to obliterate the never-dying Remembrance of Friends dead and gone; (gone for ever from his Society if there is no future State;) which ſad Remembrance cannot but intimate how wretchedly he ſtands alone, deſpoiled of his old Companions, a miſerable Contraſt to the riſing and flouriſhing Generation: It tells him, that although he ſhould ſtill graſp hold of his Virtue amid the Wreck of his wordly Happineſs, and oppreſſed amid his ruined Faculties, pathetically intreat his God (alas! what Man would diſregard ſuch Intreaty?) to raiſe him into a nobler Order of Beings. I ſay, the Expectation of total Death tells him, when all the Works of Nature ſhall have thus darkened upon him, and he ſhall have cried out to his God to take him,

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and to comfort him, and to be his all in all; that his God (whom he has loved ſo well, and aſpired ſo much to know with a nigher Familiarity, and in a brighter View of his Preſence than was ſhadowed out to him in this Life,) ſhall, with the ſtrong Hand of Omnipotence, thruſt him ſtill farther from him; ſhall extinguiſh all his virtuous Affections; ſhall expel him from every dear Circumſtance of Life; ſhall blot him out of Exiſtence; and confound him in Darkneſs, Oblivion, and the Grave, with ſuch as have diſgraced their Nature, with ſuch as have rebelled againſt their God. Theſe are the diſmal Thoughts which ariſe from the Expectation of total Death.

Thoughts ſuch as theſe muſt have been they, (for in ſhewing how far mere Reaſon may bring Life and Immortality to Light, methinks, our Examples ſhould be taken from thoſe Men who were uninſtructed by Revelation;) diſmal Thoughts, ſuch as theſe, muſt have been they, which rolling in the Mind of the *Roman Brutus*, after the Battle of *Philippi*, as he ſtood beneath the Rock meditating upon his intended Death, made him exclaim (as ſome report) upon the Vanity of Virtue: Rays of Comfort, however, he derived from the Proſpect of his never-dying Glory;—catching thus at the Shadow of Immortality, not expecting the Subſtance: For had he expected the Subſtance he would not have embraced the Shadow; he would not at leaſt have embraced it as his only Circumſtance of Conſolation. Far other Light ſhone in the Priſon of *Socrates*; there the meek Maſter of Wiſdom taught his Diſciples that Virtue was not vain, but the certain Way to immortal Life. In theſe Moments of Truth and Senſibility he triumphed in glorious Hopes. When the Heart is quite at Eaſe, in Situations unintereſting, one ſhould

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not always expect from Men the Language of Truth, but the Simplicities of Nature; the Preciſions of Conviction force themſelves from a Man when his Soul is agitated by an uncommon Situation. Such a Situation was the Priſon of *Socrates*. And it was here that this firſt of Men, wiſe with Age, yet not broken by Years, extraordinary in Learning, conſummate in moral Science, wondrous in Genius, tender hearted, frank, and companionable, expecting immediate Death, Death undeſerved, a Puniſhment inſtead of a Reward; in the Preſence of well-affected Friends and reſpectful Diſciples, with the calm Playfulneſs of Fancy, with the orderly Proceſs of Reaſon, and the warm Energies of Virtue, illuſtrates, confirms, rejoices, triumphs in the Hopes of a future State; drinks his Bowl of Poiſon with the Cheerfulneſs with the Courteſies proper at the feſtive Board, intermingled with the lofty Tranſports of a Prieſt making a Libation to *Jove*: For he was haſtening to Liberty from a Priſon, to Light from Darkneſs, from Earth and ungrateful Men to the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect, to the extraordinary Preſence of God.

Farther we need not inquire what Reaſon may determine concerning a future State, for we have heard the Opinion of *Socrates*. But, although Reaſon aſſerts that to virtuous Men their Exiſtence, if not in the preſent, yet in a future State, ſhall be more happy than miſerable; nevertheleſs, it cannot but be embarraſſed in determing how far the Mercy of God ſhall reſtore Sinners upon Repentance to the Hopes of that Felicity which all Men deſire. The Supreme Governor is entitled to all poſſible Obedience; and ſuch a Subject as Man, needs the Force of Hope and Fear to tempt him into Obedience.

Obedience. Needful, therefore, it is that Puniſhments and Rewards ſhould be exhibited to his View: Penitence may prevail with the Diſcerner of the Heart to diſpenſe with the former, not, however, to beſtow that intire Happineſs, due only to Obedience, yet neceſſary to all Men; without the well-grounded Hope of which, all Men muſt be miſerable. The Method, therefore, of reconciling the Juſtice with the Mercy of God, in reſtoring the Penitent to the Hope of that Felicity to which human Nature leans with its full Bent of Deſire, cannot but remain inſcrutable by Reaſon; cannot but be involved in the Clouds of Myſtery.

Behold, therefore, the Croſs of *Chriſt*, and ſee theſe Clouds vaniſh. That holy Perſon there crucified, is the one Oblation once offered for the Sins of the whole World. Penitence is now indeed made effectual to Salvation. But to leave abruptly theſe pleaſing Conſiderations, permit me to remind you whoſe Thoughts have not long left that Priſon which the Lectures of the dying *Socrates* had dignified: Permit me to remind you of an intereſting and very touching Circumſtance which happened on the Croſs of *Chriſt*, reſpecting the Exiſtence of a future State. 'This Day thou ſhalt be with me in Paradiſe.' You remember the Paſſage, and to whom theſe Words were ſpoken. Pauſe a Moment ere you determine upon their Significance, and, I truſt, you will determine with me, that they declare ſomething more than a reaſonable Hope; that they declare a certain Knowledge of a future State, and a Divine Penetration into the ſecret Grounds upon which only the Happineſs of the Perſon to whom they were addreſſed could be pronounced.

Socrates

Socrates and *Jeſus* died;—were buried. The Memory of the former is ſtill lovely, and ſhall flouriſh fair as long as the happieſt Union of Wit and Virtue ſhall be reſpected among Men: But the Philoſopher himſelf was ſeen no more. *Jeſus* aroſe from the Dead; and thus exemplifying the Truth of his Doctrine, fully brought Life and immortality to Light.

While Life and Immortality thus fully brought to Light, afford you pleaſing Matter of Reflection and Conſolation after the painful Survey of worldly Miſeries; methinks you are in a Temper not unſuitable for that Meditation on the Death and Character of a late excellent Prelate, which I referred to the Cloſe of this Diſcourſe. A Diſcourſe more ſuited to ſuch a Concluſion might have been framed, had the the Time permitted. Alas! little thought I ſome Time paſt, when I compoſed this poor Diſcourſe, that I ſhould make the following Addition to it; and from a View of thoſe Conſiderations, upon which all good Men may eſtabliſh their Hopes of future Happineſs, derive a particular Conſolation for the Death of this virtuous Perſon.

Such a Man, ſo eminent in his Station, ſo diſtinguiſhed in in Virtues, deſtined ſeemingly by an excellent Temperature of Mind and Body to a much longer Life, dying by an accident ſo ſudden, ſo improbable, ſo diſtreſsful in other Circumſtances, muſt exemplify with the moſt pathetic Force of Example, the the Precariouſneſs of human Life; muſt admoniſh us on what only we may depend; and uſefully point out the univerſal Termination of all our Cares, our Pleaſures, our Ambitions.

Yet,

Yet, I cannot ſatisfy myſelf in making this Uſe only of an Event ſo melancholy, I muſt follow the Courſe of my Feelings; I muſt take Leave to follow it wherever it may lead me. Extraordinary Events will juſtify a Deviation from common Forms and Uſages; and ſuch I conſider that Event which now engages our Thoughts, awakening (it may be hoped) at the ſame Time our tender Affections.

Religion, that only Foundation of Virtue, of civil Order, and private Happineſs, is in theſe Times peculiarly endangered by the two different Extremes of Scepticiſm and Enthuſiaſm; needing therefore in its real Friends that Zeal which is rational; —needing Firmneſs — Candour — Judgment — and Experience. Add to this Conſideration, that againſt our national Church ſome Objections have been reverently tendered, ſome clamorouſly urged; this Exigency therefore of our Church requires an uncommon Degree of Judgment, Experience, and good Temper, in thoſe who muſt have a principal Authority in regulating theſe great Concernments, ſhould ever any Regulations, upon proper Inquiries, and candid Deliberation, be judged neceſſary.

Certainly the Bands of Society are relaxing, and Virtue in general tending to Declination. Men are becoming every Day more bold and profligate: and Vanity and Extravagance are increaſing Vices.

The Death therefore, of every worthy Man, is to be lamented in general, as ſubducting from that Sock of good old Virtue which is decreaſing too faſt. More eſpecially lamentable is the Death of a Prelate, who was ſuitably qualified, in this Exigency of our Church, for his important Station. The Loſs of ſuch a

Perſon is publick; and ſo far private Veneration has not induced me to remind you, how truly calamitous was that Accident, which has deprived Religion of ſuch an Ornament, Guardian, and Friend.

My Sentiments upon his private Virtues may, in this reſpect at leaſt, have ſome Weight, (ſome Weight, I mean, among the few who know me) that although I ſpeak only what I am certain is true, yet I ſpeak as one who cannot candidly be ſuppoſed to have any Temptation for exceeding the Truth.

He was a Perſon of as ſweet a Temper — a Temper equally ſocial, gentle, and obliging — as can well be conceived: They who knew him, had an Opportunity of conceiving it: Would to God there were more ſuch Opportunities left! His Temper, I ſay, was not inoffenſive merely, there was much poſitive Sweetneſs, and Courteſy, and Goodneſs in it. Very cautious and guarded was he in moſt Things, yet his Civilities were lively, and highly companionable: They were not the cold Obſervations of Decorum, wherein a Man rather ſhews a ſelfiſh Fear of diſgracing himſelf, than a cordial Deſire of pleaſing his Gueſt.

If I do not ruſh on with a full Tide of Panegyrick, — more ambitious to pourtray a perfect, than a true and natural Character, — it is, becauſe I dare not uſe Invention in deſcribing a Character, which, if truly deſcribed, is effectually praiſed. The flimſy buſineſs of Decoration may be employed upon a mean Subject, but a noble one ſhould be painted with Preciſion, with Caution, with Veneration; and this is no Place (God forbid it ever ſhould be) for the Flouriſhings of rhetorical Vanity, or the intereſted Views of ſordid Adulation. Yet ſome Subjects are more

more attractive of general Admiration than others; and the Commendation beſtowed on them, is uſually moſt affected. Pride, alas! is too univerſal; and the Grand or Oſtentatious ever moſt regarded in vulgar Eſteem. But Truth leans not on the feeble, or changes with the variable Judgments of Men. Virtue is not only as Men imagine it; nor that the nobleſt Part of Virtue, which flouriſheth moſt in Deſcription. Remarkable for the leſs oſtentatious Virtues was that worthy Perſon, in whoſe Commendation I have at leaſt this Advantage, that I now ſpeak before many to whom he was well known; and who therefore will aſſent to me when I ſay, That he was not only in his natural Diſpoſitions a good Man in general, but appeared ever to employ his beſt Thoughts, and moſt cautious Judgment, in the direction of his amiable Paſſions. A pleaſing Union,—when a Man is at once amiable by Nature, and virtuous by Deſign.

The Fear of offending, ariſing from a modeſt and reſpectful Nature, perpetually attended him; a Delicacy very rare; a Delicacy not overcome in him by much Acquaintance with a World too ſelfiſh, by the gradual Hardnings of Age, and the ſecret Self-elations attending great and acquired Rank. Greatneſs veiled with Humility, cauſes not Envy; but proudly negligent and inattentive, is unpopular: But the Courteſies of Humility, though amiable, do not always accompany the nobler Virtues, uſually checking the Diſplay of ſplendid Qualities, ariſing often from mean Attentions.

And Men of ſtrong Senſe, ſeldom very benevolent, are too apt to charge others, whoſe obliging Manners reproach their Miſanthropy, with ſelfiſh Deſigns. Therefore it is needful for for me to obſerve, that the pleaſing Qualities of this Man whom

I am now deſcribing, were grafted upon a Stock of Honour and Benevolence.

The exceeding Sorrow of thoſe, who beſt knew him in the ſecret Motives of his Conduct, as well as their expreſs Declarations, pathetically enforced by the Enumeration of many ſtriking Inſtances, will juſtify me in repeating again, that this amiable Man was alike honeſt, and honourable, and benevolent.

But his was true Greatneſs, it was Chriſtian, not oſtentatious; and the Effects of his nobler Virtues were felt, where the Luſtre of them was ſoftened down by his humble Manners.

I mark only the more diſtinguiſhing Parts of his Character; not thoſe Virtues wherein he reſembled moſt good Men. I commend not Piety in a Biſhop, for a Biſhop without Piety is negligent even of the Decencies which become his Functions. I ſhould not have made this Obſervation, had not ſome of you been Witneſſes to the daily Devotions of this religious Prelate. His Piety was not clouded by any Mixture of gloomy Superſtition, nor his ſublime Converſe with Deity degraded by the fulſome Familiarities of Fanaticiſm. Richly, ſtrongly, and beautifully was it (as it were) wrought and embroidered upon a mild and modeſt ground of ſerene Temper, manly Reaſon, and Chriſtian Contentedneſs. This World, he knew, was an Abode aſſigned him by God, as well as the next; that God was here, as well as in Heaven; and that the moſt probable Method of acquiring a greater Bleſſing was, by enjoying the leſs: And he was wiſe enough to know, that this World could no otherwiſe be enjoyed, than by the Ways of Innocence and Thankfulneſs, Contentedneſs and Virtue.

Inſtrumental it was to his Happineſs, that he never took Offence, where Offence was not intended. Where it was, he poſſeſſed a gentle Art of turning it aſide. Where it was aimed with the utmoſt Strength of Folly or Malice, he repelled it with equal Strength; for he repelled it not ſo much by Retaliation, and by threatning Vengeance, as by taking Refuge in the Conſciouſneſs of his own Virtue, as by a prudent and manly Cultivation of that philoſophical Tranquillity, and Chriſtian Meekneſs, which effecting an Independance of Things external, preclude the largeſt Part of human Miſery. Nor can I, while I am in the Act of teſtifying a reſpectful Friendſhip towards his Memory, omit to mention his uncommon Steadineſs, and Warmth in Friendſhip.

Approach him after whatever Intervals of Time, and you would ſtill find him true to his old Friends; and omitting no Opportunities of expreſſing his Regard to them. It was his good Fortune to have been patronized by thoſe whom he had otherwiſe choſen for Friends. Wonder therefore we could not, at the Veneration and Affection with which he ever mentioned them. Eſpecially mentioned one, now living in an exalted Station, whoſe highly cultivated and extraordinary Underſtanding has long been eminently employed in dignifying the Laws, and ſupporting the Liberties of his Country.

But in this Age, when the Diſtinctions attractive of Reſpect, are very trivial indeed, and of ſmall Merit, and in this City more particularly, where all the glaring Follies of the Times are concentered into one blazing Point, and where Pride, too generally diffuſed, proportions its Attention to Individuals by their acknowledged Rank, or faſhionable Appearance,—It will be

uſeful

uſeful to remind moſt of you of that Humility which marked our amiable Prelate; and it is very proper that you, whoſe high Quality keeps Truth at too great a Diſtance from you elſewhere, ſhould at leaſt hear a little of it in his Place.

Though every honourable Sentiment of Ambition, every liberal Sentiment reſpecting Affluence, as the Means of gratifying a poliſhed, a benevolent, and hoſpitable Mind, were fully ſatisfied in this excellent Prelate, by his ample Appointment, yet in this State of Rank and Affluence, and unambitious Independance, he paid the ſame polite and kind Attention to all Men of all Ranks, as other Perſons might do from unworthy Motives; for they who want ſomewhat, cannot oblige too many, as all in Word, and ſome in Deed may deſerve them. Moreover the various Ranks of Men may occaſion a Difference in the Forms of Addreſs; but the Spirit ſhould be the ſame, excepting where a different Degree of Acquaintance, or ſome diſhonourable Circumſtance in the Character of the Perſon, juſtify a Variation in it. It is the harſheſt Effrontery, it is the groſſeſt Barbarity of Pride, when a Superior intentionally thruſts into the conſtant Notice of an Inferior, his own Superiority.

Remembering Death and the precarious Tenure of earthly Grandeur, every Man ſhould ſympathize with every Man. The Faſhion of this World paſſeth away; Virtue only hath an immortal Beauty, Grace, and Dignity.

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